

SENATE CHAMBER, WASHINGTON CITY,
April 20, 1862.

Dear Brother: I heartily and with great pride in you congratulate you on your escape and for the high honors you won in the battle of the 7th and the 8th. Cecilia and I have watched with the most anxious interest your course and have read every word that was accessible in regard to the battle. I need not say that it has been with the highest satisfaction. The official report of Generals Halleck and Grant leave nothing to desire except that the information as to your wound in the hand is indefinite. From your subsequent operations I infer it is not so serious as to disable you. It is a fearful battle, and I cannot yet conceive how a general rout was avoided. The first accounts gave an exaggerated account of the surprise, of whole regiments killed or captured in their tents, and of inexcusable carelessness in guarding against surprise. More recent accounts modify the extent of the surprise, but still there is an impression that sufficient care was not taken. That pickets were not far enough advanced or of sufficient force, and that General Grant should have been nearer his command. I sincerely hope he will be relieved from all blame. I enclose you a note to General Patterson.

The general tone of public sentiment is very hopeful.

This arises partly from the changed tone of our foreign news, and perhaps from the comparative ease of money matters under our enormous expenditures.

The great drawback is on account of McClellan's position. Military men of the highest character as well as all civilians think he is in a position from which he cannot retreat, and where he must fight under very great disadvantage. Still the general feeling is hopeful of the success of our arms and the preservation of the Union.

I still adhere to my conviction that we will demonstrate the strength, unity and prosperity of a Republican Government for fifty years to come. Notwithstanding your reluctance to mingle in the stirring events of the time, it will be your fate to do so and I have entire confidence that it will be with success and distinction.

Affectionately yours,

JOHN SHERMAN.

HEADQUARTERS, CAMP SHILOH,
April 22, 1862.

Dear Brother: My hand is still very sore but I am able to write some. The newspapers came back to us with accounts of our battle of the 6th and 7th inst. as usual made by people who ran away and had to excuse their cowardice by charging bad management on the part of leaders. I see that we were surprised, that our men were bayoneted in their tents, that officers had not had breakfast, &c. This is all simply false. The attack did not begin until 7 3-4 A.M. All but the worthless cowards had had breakfast. Not a man was bayoneted in or near his tent. Indeed our brigade surgeon, Hartshorn, has not yet seen a single bayonet wound on a living or dead subject. The regiments that profess to have been surprised lost no officers at all, and of the two that first broke in my division 53 and 57 Ohio, the 53 lost no officers and only 7 men, the 57 two officers and 7 men. Some of my Ohio regiments that did fight well lost as many as 49 and 34, but not a bayonet, sword or knife wound, all cannon and musket ball. Those of my brigade held our original position from 7 3-4 A.M. when the attack began, until 10 h. 10 m. when the enemy had passed my left and got artillery to enfilade my line when I ordered them to fall back. We held our second

position until 4 P.M. and then fell back without opposition to the third and last position, more than a mile from the river.

As to surprise, we had constant skirmishes with the enemies' cavalry all the week before, and I had strong guards out in front of each brigade, which guards were driven in on the morning of the battle, but before the enemy came within cannon range of my position every regiment was under arms at the post I had previously assigned to them. The cavalry was saddled and artillery harnessed up, unlimbered, and commenced firing as soon as we could see anything to fire at.

On Saturday I had no cavalry pickets out because I had no cavalry in my division. General Grant had made a new assignment of cavalry and artillery on Friday. The Ohio Fifth which had been with me was ordered to Hurlburt, and eight companies of the Fourth Illinois, Colonel Dickey, assigned to me did not get into camp till near Saturday night and I ordered them into the saddle at midnight.

I occupied the right front, McClelland was to my rear, and on his left in echelon with me was Prentiss. I watched the Rondy road and main Corinth, Prentiss the Ridge Corinth road. . . .

The enemy did not carry either of my roads until he had driven Prentiss and got in on my left. . . .

Whether we should have been on this or that side of the Tennessee river is not my business. I did not apprehend an attack from Beauregard because I thought then and think now he would have done better if he could have chosen ground as far back from our stores as possible. We are bound to attack him, and had we run out of cartridges or stores or got stampeded twenty miles back from the Tennessee the result would have been dif-

ferent from now. But we knew the enemy was in our front, but in what form could not tell, and I was always ready for an attack. I am out of all patience that our people should prefer to believe the horrid stories of butchery, ridiculous in themselves, gotten up by cowards to cover their shame, than the plain natural reports of the officers who are responsible and who saw what they describe. My report with all the subordinate reports of Brigadiers and Colonels with lists of killed and wounded and missing went to General Grant on the 11th.

The enemy is still in our front, we can get a fight the hour and minute we want it. Halleck, Buell, Grant all in authority are now here and responsibility cannot be shifted. The common soldiers and subordinates ran away and now want to blame the commanders. . . .

Your affectionate brother,

W. T. SHERMAN.

CAMP EIGHT MILES FRONT OF CORINTH,
May 7, 1862.

My Dear Brother:

The scoundrels who fled their ranks and left about half their number to do their work have succeeded in establishing their story of surprise, stuck with bayonets and swords in their tents and all that stuff.

They were surprised, astonished and disgusted at the utter want of respect for life on the part of the confederates, whom they have been taught to regard as inferior to them, and were surprised to see them approach with banners fluttering, bayonets glistening and lines dressed on the centre. It was a beautiful and dreadful sight and I was prepared for and have freely overlooked the fact that many wilted and fled, but gradually recovering, rejoined our ranks. But those who did not recover,

their astonishment has to cast about for a legitimate excuse; and the cheapest one was to accuse their officers, and strange to say, this story is believed before ours who fought two whole days. . . .

In this instance the scamps will soon learn their mistake. Those who ran and cried "surprise," "cut up," &c., expected all who stood to their work to be killed, but all were not killed and enough remained as witnesses, after the public are satisfied with the horrid stories of men butchered, &c. . . .

For two days they hung about the river bank filling the ears of newspaper reporters with their tales of horrid surprise. Regiments all cut up, *they* the only survivors and to our utter amazement we find it settling down as history. . . .

Every battery (three) was harnessed up in position before called on to fire and cavalry (only 250 in my whole division) was in the saddle at daylight, and the attack did not begin until the sun was two hours high. . . .

Prentiss was not surprised, for I sent him word an hour before the enemies' infantry began to appear, and he was not made prisoner until after 3 P.M. . . .

I confess I did not think Beauregard would abandon his railroads to attack us on our base (when he knew that by waiting a short time we should be forced to advance) where he would most assuredly have been beaten.

I am on the extreme right and we are in contact with the enemies' pickets. Some fierce struggle must soon follow, but that the war is ended or even fairly begun I do not believe.

Affectionately your brother,

W. T. SHERMAN.

WASHINGTON CITY, May 10, 1862.

My Dear Brother: I received your recent letter in which you mention your position on the morning of Sunday very opportunely.

It arrived on the morning I had to make a speech on Ohio volunteers. The imputations, whether just or unjust, upon our regiments make it necessary in the opinion of our delegation that someone should speak, and I did so. I was exceedingly anxious for your report and went or sent to the Adjutant General's office daily for several days, but was informed that none of the details or division reports had come, although several were published in the newspapers. I collected all the information I could and made my speech. Whether I am in a mile of the truth is mere chance, but I believe my statement is more accurate than any made. Read it and let me know. You will see from Harlan's remarks there is much feeling against Grant and I try to defend him, but with little success. Why is not your report sent in? Pray hereafter have a copy sent to me of all future reports. . . .

I never spoke under greater embarrassment than I did yesterday. It was a delicate subject, upon which my constituents were sensitive, and yet I was in ignorance how far your reply would overthrow me. . . .

As to your personal position you need not fear. Halleck's opinion about your action of Sunday is the opinion of the country. You are as likely to be abused on my account as on your own. I am so accustomed to storms of factious opposition as to be perfectly serene under it. I hope you will become so.

Affectionately,

JOHN SHERMAN.

HEADQUARTERS 5TH DIV., May 12, 1862.
CAMP BEFORE CORINTH.

My Dear Brother: . . . I was gratified on Monday when I came in contact with my old Kentucky command. They gathered around me and were evidently pleased to meet me again, officers and men. I think Mr. Lincoln is a pure minded, honest and good man. I have all faith in him. . . .

I think it is a great mistake to stop enlistments. There may be enough soldiers on paper, but not enough in fact. My aggregate, present and absent, is 10,452. Present for duty, 5,298; absent sick, 2,557; absent wounded, 855. The rest are on various detached duties, as teamsters or hospital attendance, embracing about 600 sick in camp.

About this proportion will run through the whole army. I have not really one thorough soldier in my whole army. They are all green and raw. . . .

Last evening I had to post my own pickets and come under the fire of the enemies' pickets. Came near being hit. Of course, being mounted and ahead, I and staff always get an undue share of attention.

I made my official report on the battle of the 6th and 7th on the 11th of April, sent it to Grant, and he to Halleck. It has not been published and it is none of my business. An officer ought not to publish anything. His report is to the Government, may contain confidential matters, and the War Department alone should have the discretion to publish or not, according to the interests of Government. . . .

I have been worried to death by the carelessness of officers and sentinels; have begged, importuned, and cursed to little purpose; and I will not be held responsible for the delinquencies of sentinels fresh from home,

with as much idea of war as children. All I know is, we had our entire front, immediate guards and grand guards, and I had all my command in line of battle well selected before we had seen an infantry soldier of the enemy. We had been skirmishing with the cavalry for several days, and we could not get behind them. All we could see was the head of their column, and that admirably qualified by familiarity of the country for the purpose of covering an approach.

Grant had been expecting Buell a whole week before he arrived. We all knew the enemy was in our front, but we had to guess at his purpose. Now that it is known, all are prophets; but before, we were supposed to be a vast aggressive force sent by an intelligent Government to invade the South, and for us to have been nervous on the subject would have indicated weakness. Beauregard then performed the very thing which Johnston should have done in Kentucky last October.

My force was divided; he could have interposed his, attacked McCook at Nolin and Thomas at London, and would have defeated us with perfect ease. The secessionists would then have had Kentucky and Missouri both. Why he did not is a mystery to me. And Buckner told me that Johnston's neglect on that occasion was so galling to him that he made him give a written order not to attempt to manœuvre. . . .

We are now encamped six miles from Corinth, pickets about one mile and a half in advance. I am on the extreme right, McClernand is in my rear and guards off to the right. The roads are again pretty good and I don't bother myself about the plans and aims of our generals. I will do all I can with my division, but regret that I have not better discipline and more reliable men. Too many of the officers are sick of the war and have

gone home on some pretence or other. I am in pretty good health and keep close to my work. The success of our arms at Norfolk and Williamsburg are extraordinary and may result in peace sooner than I calculated. All I fear is that though we progress we find plenty of push everywhere. Weather begins to be hot.

Affectionately yours,

W. T. SHERMAN.

SENATE CHAMBER, WASHINGTON, May 19, 1862.

Dear Brother: Your official report was so complete and satisfactory that it has settled forever all the absurd stories about the battle of the 6th and 7th. It also shows me that with all my care to be right I made several mistakes, especially as to the volunteers of the 6th and 7th.

Deep anxiety is felt here as to your position. I talked with the President on Saturday about the general state of the war. He evidently fears the accumulation of forces under Beauregard and said he had and would again telegraph Halleck not to move forward until he was certain to win. If the Mississippi is clear of the enemy and we get Richmond, it is thought that will secure the border States and we can afford to wait. In the mean time, even under terrible financial pressure and drain of active war, the country is flourishing. Our bonds are above par, trade is active and produce bears a good price. Much of this may be induced by the inflation of paper money, but gold is abundant, foreign importations active, and foreigners are making investments here heavily. In my experience in public affairs I have never known times more easy. If the war could only be brought to a close upon the basis of the unity and integrity of the Government, we should have a rebound of national prosperity

that would soon heal all the losses and burdens of the war. As to politics now, lines are being drawn. Radicals and Conservatives are taking sides without regard to party reasons. If the rank Secessionists would only give up their insane attempt at division they could easily secure every reasonable right. They must, however, lay aside the insolence and dogmatism with which they have domineered over our better men. If they do not abandon their cause, events will force a war in the cotton States between the whites and blacks. Hunter has already invited it, but his inconsiderate proclamation will be set aside. However, delay, defeat or a much longer continuance in the barbarity of rebel warfare will prepare the public mind in the North for a warfare that will not scruple to avail itself of every means of subjection.

In the course of business I have received many kind messages for you from your many friends, among others from Swords, Van Vleit, Garesché and others.

Affectionately yours,

JOHN SHERMAN.

After Shiloh, Sherman was made a major-general.

Corinth was evacuated and burned by the rebels on the night of May 29th, and was occupied by the Northern army on the following day.

The following order issued by Sherman to his division was found in his letter-book, and is inserted here:—

HEADQUARTERS 5TH DIV. ARMY OF THE TENN.,
CAMP BEFORE CORINTH, May 31, 1862.

ORDERS No. 30.

The General commanding 5th Division Right Wing takes this occasion to express to the officers and men of his command his great satisfaction with them for the courage, steadiness and great industry displayed by them

during the past month. Since leaving our memorable camp at Shiloh we have occupied and strongly entrenched seven distinct camps in a manner to excite the admiration and high commendation of General Halleck. The division has occupied the right flank of the Grand Army, thereby being more exposed and calling for more hard work and larger guard details than from any other single division, and the Commanding General repeats that his officers and men have promptly and cheerfully fulfilled their duty, have sprung to the musket or spade according to the occasion, and have just reason to claim a large share in the honors that are due the whole army for the glorious victory terminating at Corinth on yesterday, and it affords him great pleasure to bear full and willing testimony to the qualities of his command that have achieved this victory, a victory none the less decisive because attended with comparatively little loss of life.

But a few days ago a large and powerful rebel army lay at Corinth with outposts extending to our very camp at Shiloh. They held two railroads extending North and South, East and West across the whole extent of their country, with a vast number of locomotives and cars to bring to them speedily and certainly their reinforcements and supplies. They called to their aid all their armies from every quarter, abandoning the sea coast and the great river Mississippi that they might overwhelm us with numbers in the place of their own choosing. They had their chosen leaders, men of high education and courage, and they dared us to leave the cover of our iron clad gunboats to come and fight them in their trenches, and the still more dangerous ambuscades of their Southern swamps and forests. Their whole country from Richmond to Memphis and from Nashville to Mobile rang with their taunts and boastings, as to how they

would immolate the Yankees if they dared to leave the Tennessee River. They boldly and defiantly challenged us to meet them at Corinth. We accepted the challenge and came slowly and without attempt at concealment to the very ground of their selection, and they had fled away. We yesterday marched unopposed through the burning embers of their destroyed camps and property, and pursued them to their swamps till burning bridges plainly confessed they have fled and not marched away for better ground. It is a victory as brilliant and important as any recorded in history, and any officer or soldier who has lent his aid has just reason to be proud of his part. No amount of sophistry or words from the leaders of the Rebellion can succeed in giving the evacuation of Corinth under the circumstances any other title than that of a signal defeat, more humiliating to them and their cause than if we had entered the place over the dead and mangled bodies of their soldiers. We are not here to kill and slay, but to vindicate the honor and just authority of that Government which has been bequeathed to us by our honored fathers, and to whom we would be recreant if we permitted their work to pass to our children marred and spoiled by ambitious and wicked rebels. The General commanding while thus claiming for his division their just share in this glorious result, must at the same time remind them that much yet remains to be done, and all must still continue the same vigilant patience, industry and obedience till the enemy lay down their arms and publicly acknowledge that for their supposed grievances they must obey the laws of their country and not attempt its overthrow by threats, by cruelty and by war. They must be made to feel and acknowledge the power of a just and mighty nation.

This result can only be accomplished by a cheerful

and ready obedience to the orders and authority of our own leaders, in whom we now have just reason to feel the most implicit confidence. That the fifth division of the right wing will do this, and that in due time we will all go to our families and friends at home, is the earnest prayer and wish of your immediate commander.

W. T. SHERMAN,
Major-General.

The following was written in lead pencil on the same sheet:—

Dear Brother: Of course the telegraph has announced the evacuation of Corinth. I have sent to General Thomas commanding Right Wing my report. You ask for a copy. This is wrong, as official reports are the property of the War Department. I have sent Ellen the rough draft to keep and I have instructed her to make and send you a copy. We have had no battle and I cannot imagine why Beauregard has declined battle. I was on the extreme right and yesterday pushed into the town and beyond it, but their army had gone off and I was ordered back to this camp.

Pope and Buell are in pursuit, I understand, around by the left, but you will have the result long before you can receive this letter.

I send you a copy of my Division Order which is public, inasmuch as it is issued to my own command. Its publication would interest no one, but lest you should print it on the supposition that it would interest people, I express the wish that it be not published until Halleck's announcement of the abandonment of Corinth be first made public.

I cannot imagine what turn things will now take, but I do not think Halleck will attempt to pursue far. I

think that Beauregard cannot now subsist his army or hold it together long.

It must divide to live, and the greatest danger is that they will scatter and constitute guerilla bands. The people are as bitter against us as ever, but the leaders must admit now that they have been defeated. I hope all this army with some exceptions will be marched forthwith to Memphis. A part could be spared for Huntsville, Ala., and Nashville, but as to pursuing overland it would be absurd. We want the Mississippi now in its whole length and a moment should not be lost. I am glad the President has called for more men. He cannot have too many, and the more men the sooner the work will be done. All is not yet accomplished, although certainly great strides have been made. If McClellan succeeds at Richmond and we can take Memphis, we could afford to pause and let events work. Banks' repulse was certain. Three converging armies whose point was in possession of the enemy was worse generalship than they tried to force on me in Kentucky of diverging lines with a superior enemy between. Our people must respect the well-established principles of the art of war, else successful fighting will produce no results. I am glad you are pleased at my report at Shiloh. It possesses the merit of truth and you may safely rely on it, for I make no points but what I can sustain. Your speech was timely and proper for you. You could explain, whereas I had to report actual facts without fear or favor. I will write when more at leisure. The enemies' works are very extensive. They must have had 100,000 men.

Your brother,
W. T. SHERMAN.

MANSFIELD, Aug. 8, 1862.

Dear Brother: . . . The enlistment of recruits is now much more rapid than ever before. A regiment is organizing here and will be full in a few days. The new call for militia will also soon be filled up and I hope without a draft. Our people are beginning to feel a little more serious about the war, but the determination to wage it to a successful termination is stronger and firmer than ever. McClellan's misfortunes have allayed the political feeling that was gathering about him. His friends have much to say in his favor and his opponents are very moderate in condemning or criticising him. If you have time, write to me. For this month I will stay here as much as possible. In September I suppose I will be on the stump. After that I mean to remain as quiet as possible.

Yours affectionately,

JOHN SHERMAN.

MANSFIELD, OHIO, Aug. 24, 1862.

Dear Brother: Your letter of Aug. 13, with enclosures, was received. I have read carefully your general orders enclosed and also your order on the employment of negroes. I see no objection to the latter except the doubt and delay caused by postponing the pay of negroes until the courts determine their freedom. As the act securing their freedom is a military rule, you ought to presume their freedom until the contrary is known and pay them accordingly. . . .

You can form no conception at the change of opinion here as to the Negro Question. Men of all parties who now appreciate the magnitude of the contest and who are determined to preserve the unity of the government at all hazards, agree that we must seek the aid and make it the

interests of the negroes to help us. Nothing but our party divisions and our natural prejudice of caste has kept us from using them as *allies* in the war, to be used for all purposes in which they can advance the cause of the country. Obedience and protection must go together. When rebels take up arms, not only refuse obedience but resist our force, they have no right to ask protection in any way. And especially that protection should not extend to a local right inconsistent with the general spirit of our laws and the existence of which has been from the beginning the chief element of discord in the country. I am prepared for one to meet the broad issue of universal emancipation. . . .

By the way, the only criticism I notice of your management in Memphis is your leniency to the rebels. I enclose you an extract. I take it that most of these complaints are groundless, but you can see from it the point upon which public opinion rests. The energy and bitterness which they have infused into the contest must be met with energy and determination. . . .

Such is not only the lesson of history, the dictate of policy, but it is the general popular sentiment. I know you care very little for the latter. . . .

It is sometimes passionate, hasty and intemperate, but after a little fluctuation it settles very near the true line. You notice that Frémont, Butler, Mitchell, Turchin and Cochran are popular, while Buell, Thomas, McClellan and others are not. It is not for military merit, for most persons concede the inferiority in many respects of the officers first named, but it is because these officers agree with and act upon the popular idea. . . .

I want to visit you in Memphis and if possible go see the 64th and 65th. If it is possible or advisable, let me know and give me directions how to get there. It is but

right that I should see the regiments I organized, and besides I should like to see you if I should not incommode you and interfere with your public duties. . . .

Since my return I have spent most of my time in my Library. I have always felt that my knowledge of American politics was rather the superficial view of the politician and not accurate enough for the position assigned me. I therefore read and study more and speak less than usual. . . .

We all wait with intense anxiety the events impending in Virginia. We all fear results for a month to come. Now is the chance for the rebels.

Affectionately yours,

JOHN SHERMAN.

V

Halleck succeeds McClellan—Sherman ordered to Memphis—Losses through furloughs—Discouragement at the North in the autumn of 1862—The election—Explanation of the Republican disasters by John Sherman—General Sherman leaves Memphis with 18,000 men, and joins Grant—Back in Memphis—Starts on the expedition against Vicksburg—Failure of the attack—John Sherman on Banks—McClelland in command—Comments of General Sherman—Hostility of the newspapers on account of his objection to correspondents—His censure of the press since the beginning of the war—Alarm at the consolidation of regiments

ON July 16th Halleck, who had just been ordered to the East to succeed McClellan, sent Sherman a dispatch telling him that Grant was to succeed to his (Halleck's) command, and ordering Sherman to Memphis. Sherman reached Memphis July 21st, and immediately took command, giving his time to the discipline and drill of his two divisions and to the administration of civil affairs.

MEMPHIS, August 26th, 1862.

Dear Brother: . . . Gradually the practice has come into my original proposition that none but discharged soldiers should go home, or wounded men. All others should be in regimental hospitals, or hospitals established near at hand where as they convalesce they can join. Although from the President down to the lowest Brigadier orders to this effect have been issued, yet there are hundreds trying to get their brothers and sons home. I know full well the intense desire to get home, but any army would be ruined by this cause alone. McClellan has 70,000 absent from his army. Some were sick, but certainly not over 20,000; with the other 50,000 our coun-